

Circular Letter No. 63.

December 16, 1910.

To Supervising Principals.

Gentlemen:--

Judging from reports received from the General Superintendents, I am led to believe that the following suggestions regarding the teaching of Spanish throughout the grades will aid you in your efforts to obtain the best results possible.

1. Teachers. Instruction in Spanish should be given by teachers who have made a specialty of this subject or who have proved their ability in a practical way. Just because a given teacher cannot teach in English is no reason why he should necessarily be given the work in Spanish.

2. Preparation of Work. Apparently many teachers of Spanish think that because this is their mother tongue, there is no necessity of making a carefully prepared outline of the work to be covered each day. There are teachers who spend an hour or two preparing the work for a recitation in History or Arithmetic in English, and who devote but a few minutes to preparing for a recitation to be conducted in Spanish. Instructions contained in Circular Letter No. 55, undr date of December 2, 1910, are just as applicable to the teaching of the Spanish language as to any other subject in the curriculum.

3      3. Grammar. There is a tendency among the teachers of Spanish to put too much stress on grammar as an isolated subject. This should be closely correlated with the reading of literary gems to be found in the test-books. Better and more lasting results will be obtained by having the pupils deduce the grammatical rules from examples in the reading books than by having them learn the rules from the grammar and then apply them.

4. Orthography and Dictation. Spanish offerx from few irregularities. In orthography a few general rules can be made which will greatly aid the pupils once they have been learned. These rules should be taught when occasion offers in the reading lesson and practiced in frequent dictation exercises.

5. Pronunciation. This deserves special attention on the part of the teacher. "As is the teacher, so is the school." If the teacher does not pronounce Spanish correctly, the pupils will not. Care should be exercised to the end that each letter be given its true sound and each syllable pronounced distinctly.

6. Incorrect Expressions. The use of incorrect expressions should be avoided. The study of English will not to allow the pupils to use English words or expressions in Spanish conversation. If constant care is exercised in this matter, Spanish will be spoken in Porto Rico in all its purity.

Composition Work. Too little practice is given in writing Spanish. Frequently the only written work is unconnected sentences to illustrate grammar rules. Composition work to develop facility in the correct use of words and expressions is a necessity and should be an important feature of the work. In this connection the practice of having such composition work placed on the board and corrected before the class cannot be given too much emphasis.

Please give special attention to the teaching of Spanish in the schools under your direction to the end that even more satisfactory results may reward our efforts.

Yours very truly,

Acting Commissioner.